

Responding to the Educational and Psychological Needs of Children and Families in Durham's Transitional Housing

Our Mission

We seek to study impacts of homelessness and housing insecurity on the educational and psychological experiences of children, youth and their families.

Working collaboratively with our community partner, Families Moving Forward, team members pursue two lines of inquiry

- (1) the implications of trauma identification for children and families in Durham's transitional housing
- (2) quality practices to support educational needs of school-aged children at Families Moving Forward.

Methods

- Each of our project team members researched questions of his/her own, and spent the first part of the year reading and writing about his/her respective topics.
- Volunteer at the Study Buddies program to work with the students and get a human/direct perspective on our research.

Results

- To best deliver services, schools need to create "trauma-informed cultures" while empowering students and parents to understand their rights and resources.
- Self-concept is a protective factor to trauma improving overall well-being, with interventions such as after-school and summer literacy programs shown to increase school-aged children's self-concept.
- One of the most effective ways to improve family functioning, mental health, and child development in transitional homes is to teach and encourage positive parenting behaviors.
- Unstructured leisure time for children stagnates a child's growth, while structured leisure activity - be it educational or not - rapidly increases a child's development.
- Major approaches to engage more students in afterschool programs include on-going individual attention, sufficient resources, support for students' study and social skills, and expanding parental involvements.
- The key to make mothers more involved with their children's education is to increase their self-efficacy.
- Durham's history of redlining and predatory housing practices are directly related to educational inequities today in Durham Public Schools.

Deliverables

- Academic Deliverables: Literature Reviews and Annotated Bibliographies
- New Tutor Evaluation Forms
- New Curriculums for Study Buddies Program, grades K - 8
- Leisure Activity Programming
- Positive Parenting Pamphlet
- Summer Reading Program
- FMF Exit Resources for Families

Our Team

Undergraduate Students

1. *Nourhan Elsayed*, Psychology and Cultural Anthropology, Trinity 2016
2. *Kathryn Henschel*, Psychology and Global Health, Trinity 2016
3. *Margaret Booz*, Psychology and English, Trinity 2017
4. *Cam-Ha Nguyen*, Public Policy and Asian & Middle Eastern Studies, Trinity 2018
5. *Julia Kaufman*, International Comparative Studies and Global Health, Trinity 2018
6. *Katherine Berko*, Psychology, Trinity 2018
7. *Shadman Uddin*, Public Policy, Trinity 2018
8. *Taylor Panzer*, Psychology, Trinity 2018

Community Members

1. *Ryan Fehrman*, Families Moving Forward
2. *Ann Tropiano*, Families Moving Forward

Advisors

1. *Amy Anderson*, Professor in Education
2. *Christina Grimes*, Professor in Psychology & Neuroscience
3. *Neil Hoefs*, Office of Durham and Regional Affairs



Example of the "Grab Bags" created to allow easy access to educational and mindfulness activities.

